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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-382-67

5 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Demilitarization of the DMZ and a Bombing
Halt in North Vietnam ~~(S)~~

1. ~~(S)~~ Reference is made to:

a. Your memorandum, dated 20 June 1967, subject as above, which forwarded a State Department memorandum on the above subject and which requested the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thereon.

b. JCSM-648-66, dated 10 October 1966, subject: "Proposals for a New International Control Commission for Supervision of a Peace Treaty in Vietnam (S)."

c. JCSM-107-67, dated 27 February 1967, subject: "A Settlement of the Conflict in Vietnam (U)."

d. JCSM-286-67, dated 20 May 1967, subject: "Operations Against North Vietnam (U)."

e. JCSM-288-67, dated 20 May 1967, subject: "Worldwide US Military Posture (U)."

f. JCSM-312-67, dated 2 June 1967, subject: "Air Operations Against NVN (U)."

2. ~~(S)~~ In response to your request in reference 1a, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have studied the memorandum by the Department of State and the Canadian proposal upon which it rests. Their views are expressed in detail in the Appendix and Annexes hereto. In summary, these views are:

a. A prerequisite for an effective international control commission (ICC) force is the organization of an ICC free of the existing deficiencies described in reference 1b. It

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should be noted that, historically, ICCs have been ineffective. Assuming an acceptable ICC can be formed, the key factor in determining the composition of an ICC force for the demilitarized zone (DMZ), when linked with a proposal for cessation of US bombing in North Vietnam (NVN), is whether it should be capable of preventing, by force if necessary, violations of the DMZ or whether it should be only a detecting and reporting organization. In the absence of demonstrated good faith among the belligerents and with a mission of preventing violations of the DMZ, the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimate that a force built around the equivalent of three US divisions, with appropriate tactical air support, would be required. This force could be reduced to brigade size if good faith were demonstrated.

b. An effectively closed DMZ would limit the maneuver room of North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong (NVA/VC) units in the northern portion of the I CTZ and might permit the deployment of some US/Free World forces to more critical areas in the I CTZ. However, it would also permit NVA/VC forces to intensify their efforts in the more difficult terrain along the Laotian border.

c. Reference 1c describes the conditions which should attend a halt of the bombing in NVN. Prominent among the criteria is "... a cessation by NVN of its infiltration of personnel and materiel into SVN and Laos" Closure of the DMZ would eliminate some infiltration routes but would not have a significant over-all effect on infiltration. Routes through Laos and Cambodia and Vietnamese coastal waters would still be available to the communists. Thus, the military value of an effectively closed DMZ would be limited.

d. Air operations against NVN are an essential element of the US strategy in Southeast Asia. The Canadian proposal will in no way alter this requirement. In references 1d, 1e, and 1f, the Joint Chiefs of Staff describe the need for an expanded air campaign against NVN, designed to reduce drastically its ability to continue the war. If adopted, the Canadian proposal would require the United States to abandon this portion of its military strategy, and an important "blue chip" negotiating asset would be forfeited without commensurate gain.

e. With respect to certain other US programs in Southeast Asia, the Canadian proposal would:

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(1) Eliminate the requirement for that portion of ILLINOIS CITY in South Vietnam and result in increased NVN pressure on that portion designed for emplacement in Laos.

(2) Increase the importance of PRAIRIE FIRE.

(3) Probably force the cessation of that portion of SEA DRAGON operations involving naval bombardment of targets ashore.

(4) Probably make justification of continued bombing in Laos more difficult.

f. Weather and seasonal factors are relevant only to the timing of the proposal. Political events will also affect the timing. If an approach is to be made to Hanoi, the least undesirable time for implementation of the proposal would be after the national elections in South Vietnam but taking into account the timing of monsoon weather in Laos, at the DMZ, and in NVN (see Annex H).

3. (S) In consideration of the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that to halt combat air operations against NVN in exchange for effective closing of the DMZ is clearly disadvantageous to the United States and its Allies, and they recommend that the Canadian proposal not be adopted.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments

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APPENDIX

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ANNEX A

RECAPITULATION OF QUESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

QUESTION

a. What would constitute an effective ICC force for the DMZ?

b. What would be the value to us of an effectively closed DMZ:

- (1) In limiting the maneuver room of NVA units in northern I Corps?
- (2) In limiting infiltration of men and supplies?

CONCLUSIONS

- a. The present ICC for Vietnam is denied free movement in communist-held territory and lacks organic transportation and communications. In addition, its composition and rules of procedure have hindered its functioning. Effective inspection and verification in these circumstances cannot be expected.
- b. If the United States is to accept an international presence in Vietnam, a new organization must be developed, free of the serious deficiencies of the present ICC.
- c. Past communist behavior patterns indicate there is serious doubt that any form of international control commission could deter or prevent violations of the DMZ unless good faith prevails on the part of the belligerents.
- d. The ICC force required for effective control of the DMZ will vary according to the degree of good faith shown by the belligerents.
- e. The size of an effective ICC force may range from a reinforced brigade to a three-division force.
- a. Effective demilitarization of the DMZ would:
 - (1) Reduce enemy pressure on friendly forces in northern I CTZ.
 - (2) Require NVA units to infiltrate via Laos and Cambodia.
 - (3) Deny NVA forces a relatively safe sanctuary.
 - (4) Not stop or seriously inhibit over-all NVN support of communist forces in SVN.

QUESTION

- c. If our bombing continued in Laos and South Vietnam, what advantages of our bombing programs would we be giving up?

CONCLUSIONS

- a. Cessation of the bombing of NVN would forfeit the principal means controlled by the United States for carrying the war to the enemy in NVN and would relinquish a valuable "blue chip" negotiating asset.
- b. The relaxation of pressure inherent in the foregoing would adversely affect the over-all strategy for attainment of US objectives.
- c. The enemy would be provided an additional incentive to sustain and increase his support of the aggression in SVN, thus prolonging the war. The proposal would be beneficial to NVN morale and detrimental to US/Free World morale in SVN.
- d. Our allies in SVN would consider the United States irresolute in its determination to force the Hanoi government to cease its support of the insurgency.
- e. The GVN would suffer a loss of stature at home.
- f. Some 300,000 NVN LOC maintenance and construction workers would be released for other work.

- d. What is the relevance of the proposal to:

(1) ILLINOIS CITY?

- a. Should the DMZ be closed effectively by forces supporting the ICC, the strong point/obstacle portion of the anti-infiltration system below the DMZ would be redundant.

- b. Under similar circumstances, the air-supported anti-infiltration system in the pan-handle region of southern Laos would be under pressure from NVN.

- c. Cessation of bombing in NVN would increase the NVA's ability to counter the air supported barrier in Laos.

- d. In addition, if bombing in Laos should be suspended as a consequence of the standdown of operations against NVN, ILLINOIS CITY cannot be supported.

(2) PRAIRIE FIRE?

- a. Closing of the DMZ and cessation of combat air operations against NVN would increase VC/NVA use of and defensive deployments in the Lao corridor, and thus increase the need for PRAIRIE FIRE operations, while rendering execution more difficult.

- b. Should bombing be halted in Laos, PRAIRIE FIRE operations would be curtailed in scope and deprived of their principal means of combat support, with a consequent increase in vulnerability to enemy counteraction.

ANNEX

QUESTION

What is the relevance of the proposal to:

(3) SEA DRAGON?

(4) Weather and seasonal factors?

e. If the proposal is to be made, what should be the timing?

f. What will be the effect of the proposal on the bombing in Laos?

CONCLUSIONS

- a. SEA DRAGON operations have been effective in interdicting infiltration of military material along the coastal waterways of NVN south of 20°N latitude.
- b. Should the bombing of NVN be halted, as stated in the proposal, SEA DRAGON operations against enemy watercraft should continue.
- c. Despite the foregoing, it is judged that cessation of bombing in NVN would be accompanied by restraints against naval surface operations against NVN.
- a. The least undesirable time for demilitarizing the DMZ would be at the onset of the southwest monsoon, usually in the month of May.
- b. For the termination of bombing in NVN the least undesirable time would be the onset of the northeast monsoon or late October.
- c. The enemy's system of base areas and prestocks tends to compensate for reduced throughput of material in bad weather.
- a. If the proposal is to be made, it would be least undesirable, from the viewpoint of GVN stability, to wait until the newly elected government has taken office, following the September election.
- b. If adopted, the proposal should be timed to follow approval of new and adequate terms of reference for an ICC and organization of a DMZ force.
- a. Should a decision be reached to halt air operations against NVN, the United States may also be subject to pressure to halt the bombing in Laos.
- b. Should airstrikes into Laos continue, increased anti-air defense along the LOCs can be expected, with consequent increases in aircraft losses.

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ANNEX B

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION A

1. (C) QUESTION. What would constitute an effective
ICC force for the DMZ?
2. (TS) BACKGROUND
 - a. An interdepartmental group is currently developing principles and guidelines for an effective inspection and verification system.
 - b. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have proposed* that the findings of this group provide the basis for a Department of Defense study of an appropriate ICC structure. Such a study would:
 - (1) Evaluate manning, equipment, procedures, techniques, and employment.
 - (2) Conduct field tests as feasible and required to determine the composition, techniques, and employment of an investigation and reporting system.
3. (TS) DISCUSSION
 - a. Mission. Basic issues associated with defining an effective ICC force are to identify the missions of such a force and the level of capability desired. Should the force do more than detect, investigate, and report on actions of the belligerents? For instance, should the force be capable of preventing by force, if necessary, significant violations of the DMZ?
 - b. Minimum Capabilities. While the United States has publicly stated that the ". . . Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962 are an adequate basis for peace in Southeast Asia . . .",** it will be necessary to remodel and revitalize the international means for supervision if meaningful guarantees are to be obtained. Toward this end, effective, workable supervision of

* JCSM 648-66, dated 10 October 1966

** State Department Press Release No. 4, dated 17 January 1966, "14 Points for Peace in Southeast Asia."

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the DMZ, under ICC auspices, would require the following minimum capabilities not possessed by the present ICC:

- (1) That an ICC possess full authority for investigating and reporting violations in the DMZ;
- (2) Sufficient forces to assure the security of all ICC operations and to accomplish assigned mission;
- (3) That issues be decided by majority rather than unanimous vote;
- (4) That an appropriate international agency assume the functions presently delegated to the co-chairmen designated by the 1954 Geneva Conference;
- (5) That forces assigned to the international agency be completely responsive to that agency;
- (6) That reporting procedures be prescribed specifically to include minority reporting on all issues;
- (7) Full and unrestricted access by inspection teams to all areas and facilities in the DMZ; and
- (8) That inspection teams be self-sufficient in logistics, transportation, and communication-electronic support.

c. Size and Organization. The size of an effective ICC force will be related directly to the mission assigned and is influenced by the good faith of the belligerents. It is recognized that the present ICC is an investigative and reporting agency and is not charged with enforcement of the Geneva agreement. However, to be effective, a control commission and its attached forces should function as a buffer between and deterrent to the belligerents, provide for its own security, and accomplish the mission assigned. A preliminary estimate of the

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magnitude of such forces under various assumptions 1

as to the intent of the belligerents is: 2

| <u>Component</u> | <u>Strength</u> | <u>Purpose</u> | 3 |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Headquarters | 450 | Provide operational, administrative, logistical, transportation, and communication support. | 4 5 6 7 8 |
| Intelligence | 50 | Collate, evaluate, and interpret information provided by both sides. | 9 10 11 12 |
| Inspection and Verification | 600 | Field team functions to include air reconnaissance. | 13 14 15 |
| Military | a. Minimum Force (3 battalions with appropriate support)* | If good faith prevails, these battalions could provide security for field teams and serve as a limited buffer between opposing sides. Its inspection and verification effectiveness would depend upon freedom of movement throughout the DMZ. Adequate tactical air support (including air fields) would be required. | 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 |
| | b. Median Force (1 1/3 divisions with appropriate support)* | If the good faith of the belligerents is questionable, this force could detect and deter infiltration through the DMZ. The size force is similar to the estimates by COMUSMACV for ILLINOIS CITY. This force would have the ability to establish and man a strong point system in the DMZ. Adequate tactical air support (including air fields) would be required. | 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 |
| | c. Maximum Force (3 Division Force with appropriate support)* | If good faith does not exist and compliance with the agreement appears unlikely, provision must be made to control the entire DMZ. This force could effectively prevent violation of the DMZ throughout its length and provide for its own security. Adequate tactical air support (including air fields) would be required. | 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 |

* US equivalents

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4. FEASIBILITY: Having estimated the size and composition of an effective ICC force, an assessment of the practicability of creating and deploying such a force is a pertinent issue in weighing the merits of the Canadian proposal. The international authority for such a force would have to be the UN or some formally convened and recognized international agency such as the one emerging from the Geneva Conference of 1954. Past experience with international forces of this nature - e.g., the ICC force in the Vietnam DMZ and the UN Expeditionary Force in the Gaza Strip area has highlighted the practical problems of obtaining political agreement to create the force initially and, after deployment of the force, of its taking effective enforcement action against belligerents. The mission of these forces has almost always been passive in nature. The problems associated with forming and deploying an international combat force of up to three US divisions, which would deter or take action against a belligerent during conditions of continuing conflict, appear to be insurmountable. Thus, an ICC force which merely detected and reported violations without a significant capability to deter or prevent violations would be the most likely result. Past experience indicates that such a force would be of little use in the present conflict.

5. (TS) CONCLUSIONS

a. The present ICC for Vietnam is denied free movement in communist-held territory and lacks organic transportation and communications. In addition, its composition and rules of procedure have hindered its functioning. Effective inspection and verification in these circumstances cannot be expected.

b. If the United States is to accept an international presence in Vietnam, a new organization must be developed, free of the serious deficiencies of the present ICC.

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- c. Past communist behavior patterns indicate there is 1
serious doubt that any form of international control 2
commission could deter or prevent violations of the DMZ, 3
unless good faith prevailed on the part of the belligerents. 4
- d. The ICC force required for effective coverage of 5
the DMZ will vary according to the degree of good faith 6
shown by the belligerents. 7
- e. The size of an effective ICC force may range from 8
a reinforced brigade to a three-division force. 9

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ANNEX C

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION B

1. (C) QUESTION. What would be the value to us of an effectively closed DMZ:
 - a. In limiting the maneuver room of NVA units in northern I Corps?
 - b. In limiting infiltration of men and supplies?
2. (S) BACKGROUND. To date, two instances of large-scale infiltration across the DMZ have been confirmed: the 324B NVA Division in the summer of 1966 and a regiment of the 325th NVA Division and 5th NVA Regiment in March/April 1967. However, continuing infiltration on a lesser scale has occurred. In addition, the NVA has employed the DMZ area extensively as a sanctuary, as well as an avenue for resupply of forces in Northern I CTZ. NVA artillery has been positioned in the area immediately north of the Demarcation Line.
3. (S) DISCUSSION
 - a. An effective demilitarized zone, closed to personnel and logistical infiltration would:
 - (1) Deprive communist forces located in northern I CTZ of a relatively safe sanctuary and thus limit somewhat their ability to maneuver.
 - (2) Deny enemy forces in northern I CTZ artillery support from across the DMZ.
 - (3) Make resupply and replacement of losses somewhat more difficult in that the enemy would be restricted to the infiltration network in Laos and to water craft.
 - (4) Reduce the likelihood of tactical surprise and permit the reorientation of some US/RVN forces presently deployed at the DMZ.
 - b. Other than the uses described in paragraph 2, above, there has been no major shift in the pattern of infiltration from the Laos network to the DMZ. It is estimated

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that closure of the DMZ would have little effect on the
bulk of the infiltration from NVN to SVN but could
affect the support of enemy forces in the immediate area
of the DMZ. Infiltration over any given route appears
to be regulated by the needs of the enemy in the South,
scheduled areas of operation, the missions assigned, and
the friendly situation. The bulk of enemy resupply
appears to pass through the Laos infiltration system.

4. (S) CONCLUSIONS. Effective demilitarization of the
DMZ would:

a. Reduce enemy pressure on friendly forces in
northern I CTZ.

b. Require NVA units to infiltrate via Laos and
Cambodia.

c. Deny NVA forces a relatively safe sanctuary.

d. Not stop or seriously inhibit over-all NVN
support of communist forces in SVN.

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ANNEX D TO APPENDIX

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION C

1. (S) QUESTION. If our bombing continued in Laos and South Vietnam, what advantages of our bombing programs would we be giving up? 1
2. (TS) BACKGROUND 2
- a. A key element of the US strategy for Vietnam has been, through the air campaign, to apply increasing pressure against NVN. The over-all military operations are designed to force NVN to halt its support of the communist insurgency in SVN and to come to the negotiating table. 3
- b. Operating under various restraints, combat air operations against NVN have effectively reduced that country's warmaking capacity. Among targets destroyed or neutralized are 60 percent of NVN POL storage, 70 percent of its ammunition storage, and 46 percent of its power plant capacity. Despite improved antiair defenses, the aircraft loss rate over NVN for CY 1967 is less than for the last six months of 1966. NVN support of the war in the South has continued; however, there is no doubt that the air war over NVN has slowed and made more difficult the resupply of men and materiel to SVN. 4
- c. Since February 1967, additional targets and improving weather have improved the effectiveness of the air campaign in the northeast quadrant of NVN, increasing the level of damage in that area more than during the entire previous ROLLING THUNDER program. In the interdiction program, 5

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damage inflicted on vehicles, watercraft, and rolling stocks
has reached a new high. Railway system capabilities have
deteriorated. The truck replacement rate has been lower
than the destruction rate. Port congestion is increasing,
as shown by pileup of materials and increased offloading
time for ships. The cumulative results of our strikes have
caused multiple management, supply, and distribution problems.
New weapons, particularly the CBU-24 and WALLEYE, which add to
our effectiveness, are reaching the field.

3. (TS) DISCUSSION

a. The current air campaign against NVN is an integral part
of the over-all US strategy in SEAsia. Identifiable changes in
the air operations in NVN have developed and are having
important effects on the efficiency of our operations and
the further degradation of the enemy's capability to support
the war. It is most significant that these changes are recent
and have occurred since early May when air operations in the
North were stepped up, bringing the enemy's rear support area
under much more continuous pressure. These changes indicate
an upward trend of strategic impact against NVN. It is
important to note that there is no lack of critical targets
in NVN. It is believed that high sortie rates and improved
weapons, techniques, and targeting concepts are paying off.

b. The war cannot properly be compartmentalized. Combat
operations of various types, in several countries, are con-
tributing to the achievement of US military objectives. It
is against this background that the suspension of air operations
in NVN should be examined. Although hypothetical, such an
examination should indicate any change in the course of the war
which might occur.

c. The bombing campaign has created a number of problems for
NVN leaders:

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(1) In obtaining necessary war supplies and moving
them to SVN; and

(2) In maintaining the nation's economy at a level
sufficient to feed and supply its population and its forces.

d. Suspension of bombing without substantial, reciprocal
deescalation would provide Hanoi with evidence that the
United States is tiring of the war and is abandoning the
initiative. It would indicate to Hanoi that the United
States had decided it could not obtain its objectives
through the bombing of NVN and had yielded to the critics
of its bombing policy. Such indications should increase
the determination of the North Vietnamese people. Hanoi
would be encouraged to pursue the war in SVN and to probe
further into our resolve. Similarly, the suspension of bomb-
ing could also check any inclination in NVN to negotiate
for peace.

e. Hanoi is aware that the United States has linked
cessation of the bombing with reciprocal deescalation. To
offer up a "blue chip" negotiating asset for a concession
that is neither substantial in the eyes of the international
community nor related to Hanoi's ability to continue the
war would represent a retreat from our announced position.
Time would be afforded NVN to prepare for another phase of the
war in SVN, repair the damage suffered, and increase its
defenses, should bombing be resumed. A major lesson learned
from the Korean armistice talks was that no concession should
be made on major items* since the communists would regard it
as a sign of weakness.

f. In addition, cessation of bombing would weaken the
US position in other SEAsia countries. Thailand would be
concerned about the revision of US policy. In Laos, the
Government would be under greater pressure to halt
in-country bombing. To further placate Hanoi and Peking,

* CINCPAC msg to JCS, 042030Z June 1967, JCS IN 55604

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Cambodia would become more militant in opposing the US
presence in SEAsia. Free World troop contributors would
be under internal pressures to bring home their troops in
anticipation of an early end to the war. In SVN, the extent
of the political and psychological repercussions would be
difficult to gauge. However, a decision by the United
States to halt the bombing could cause a major reorientation
by the SVN Government away from US military and political
objectives. Within the United States, these pressures
would strengthen those factions which advocate a political
solution short of stated US objectives.

g. Military risks are attached to any standdown of
offensive military operations. Experience has demonstrated
the ability of the enemy to react rapidly to improve his
military posture. Based on this experience, some specific
results we could expect are:

(1) Use of all lines of communications throughout
NVN would be restored. Bridges, roads, and railroads
would be repaired and normal schedules resumed. Port
discharge rates would be improved. Manpower and
materials could be made available for other tasks.

(2) The training of personnel for NVA units would
proceed at a more rapid pace. Able-bodied males of
military age, previously used for repair and maintenance
functions, would become available as replacements for
military units and probably to expand NVN's activities
in Laos. At present, this maintenance and repair
force numbers some 300,000 NVN workers. NVA and
civilian morale and determination would improve.
The bombing cessation could be interpreted as a
military victory by the North Vietnamese.

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(3) With the threat to NVN eliminated, resources would
be released for use in SVN. The North Vietnamese would
probably redeploy some air defense units in such a way
as to protect their remaining infiltration routes to
the South, with consequent increases in aircraft losses
in Laos and decreased effectiveness in the interdiction
program.

(4) A standdown of air operations against enemy forces
in southern NVN could jeopardize the security of friendly
forces in the vicinity of the DMZ.

(5) A bombing suspension would be damaging to SVN
morale.

(6) The air campaign in the north is a major military
activity in which the United States retains the initiative
and controls the intensity of combat.

4. (TS) ADVANTAGES FORFEITED

a. NVN should not be allowed to export insurgency from
a complete sanctuary. The results of airstrikes are
tangible proof to NVN of the consequences of its actions.

b. Improved targeting, stepped-up combat air effort
over northeast NVN, and the continued high sortie rate
against enemy infiltration are gradually paying off.
Halting the bombing against NVN would remove an important
source of US attrition of the enemy.

c. The air campaign is a continuing deterrent to
full-scale invasion of SVN by major NVA forces.

d. Substantial NVN manpower resources are committed to
air and coastal defense, repair and reconstruction, and
support of a dispersal program.

e. Continued air operations against NVN reflect the
determination of the United States to seek negotiations
without preconditions and will retain for it an impor-
tant trading asset, once negotiations have begun.

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f. In terms of timing, the most favorable weather for US
air operations in NVN has commenced. Increased pressures
can be imposed on NVN to increase the cost to Hanoi of its
support of the war in the South.

5. (TS) CONCLUSIONS

a. Cessation of the bombing of NVN would forfeit
the principal means controlled by the United States for
carrying the war to the enemy in NVN and would relinquish a
valuable "blue chip" negotiating asset.

b. The relaxation of pressure inherent in the foregoing
would adversely affect the over-all strategy for attainment
of US objectives.

c. The enemy would be provided an additional incentive
to sustain and increase his support of the aggression in
SVN, thus prolonging the war. The proposal would be
beneficial to NVN morale and detrimental to US/Free World
morale in SVN.

d. Our allies in SVN would consider the United States
irresolute in its determination to force the Hanoi
government to cease its support of the insurgency.

e. The GVN would suffer a loss of stature at home.

f. Some 300,000 NVN LOC maintenance and construction
workers would be released for other work.

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ANNEX E

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION D (1)

1. (C) QUESTION. What is the relevance of the proposal
to ILLINOIS CITY? 1
2
2. (TS) BACKGROUND. COMUSMACV has provided two inter- 3
related plans for interdicting the flow of personnel and 4
material into South Vietnam. One plan would establish a 5
strong point/obstacle system located just south of the DMZ, 6
extending approximately 22 miles from the coast to the 7
mountains with a possible extension to the Laotian border. 8
The second plan would create an air-supported anti-infiltra- 9
tion system to interdict LOCs in the Laos Panhandle, which, 10
if it were to prove effective, could be extended into the 11
western DMZ area. Some of the forces and specialized 12
equipment required are being readied and deployed to 13
protect a 1 November 1967 initiation of construction (IOC) 14
should execution of the plans be ordered. 15
3. (TS) DISCUSSION 16
 - a. Effective demilitarization of the DMZ would make the 17
strong point/obstacle system redundant. Programmed forces 18
and resources procured for the system could be used else- 19
where. 20
 - b. If bombing in NVN were halted, the air-supported 21
anti-infiltration system in the Laos Panhandle would 22
assume greater importance; however, operation of this 23
system is dependent on continued airstrikes in this area. 24
Should the DMZ be closed, infiltration and logistic support 25
through Laos would undoubtedly increase, providing 26
additional targets. Cessation of the air campaign against 27
NVN will release manpower, material, and technical resources 28
to counter the air-supported anti-infiltration system. A 29
greater number of antiaircraft weapons would become avail- 30
able for use against aircraft in Laos. 31

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4. (TS) CONCLUSIONS

- a. Should the DMZ be closed effectively by the ICC,
the strong point/obstacle portion of the anti-
infiltration system near the DMZ would be redundant.
- b. Under similar circumstances, the air-supported anti-
infiltration system in the panhandle region of southern
Laos would be under pressure from NVN.
- c. Cessation of bombing in NVN would increase the NVA's
ability to counter the air-supported barrier in Laos.
- d. In addition, if bombing in Laos should be suspended
as a consequence of the standdown of operations against
NVN, ILLINOIS CITY cannot be supported.

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ANNEX F

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION D (2)

1. (C) QUESTION. What is the relevance of the proposal to
PRAIRIE FIRE?
2. (TS) BACKGROUND
 - a. PRAIRIE FIRE consists of reconnaissance and inter-
diction operations in a strip of Laos 20 kilometers wide,
adjacent to the Laos/SVN border.
 - b. The limited assets available to this program restrict
the scope of PRAIRIE FIRE activities to approximately three
reconnaissance and two exploitation force missions per week.
Planned expansion of the program should treble this capa-
bility within the next 12 months.
 - c. Operations depend heavily on combat air operations to
support teams engaged with the enemy and to attack targets
developed by the teams. PRAIRIE FIRE operations average
ten supporting tactical air sorties per mission.
 - d. PRAIRIE FIRE reporting provides the best, and often
the only, hard intelligence of enemy activity in this area
of southeastern Laos.
3. (TS) DISCUSSION
 - a. The proposal would highlight the importance to the
enemy of the Lao infiltration route and thus enhance the
importance of PRAIRIE FIRE operations.
 - b. However, if bombing is halted in Laos, the surviv-
ability and effectiveness of PRAIRIE FIRE teams would be
impaired considerably. The teams would be incapable of
operating in some areas without combat air support and the
benefits presently accruing from ground-vector airstrikes
would be lost.
4. (TS) CONCLUSIONS
 - a. Closing of the DMZ and cessation of combat air opera-
tions against NVN would increase VC/NVA use of and defen-
sive deployments in the Lao corridor and thus increase
the need for PRAIRIE FIRE operations, while rendering
execution more difficult.

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b. Should bombing be halted in Laos, PRAIRIE FIRE opera- 1
tions would be curtailed in scope and deprived of their 2
principal means of combat support, with a consequent 3
increase in vulnerability to enemy counteraction. 4

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DISCUSSION OF QUESTION D (3)

1. (U) QUESTION. What is the relevance of the proposal
to SEA DRAGON? 1 2
2. (TS) BACKGROUND 3
 - a. SEA DRAGON denotes naval surface operations against
logistic watercraft, selected NVN military installations,
and land lines of communication between 17 and 20 degrees
north latitude. 4 5 6 7
 - b. These interdiction operations commenced in late
October 1966 against military logistic waterborne craft. 8 9
On 22 February 1967, additional authority was granted to
fire at suitable military targets ashore, within the above
latitude limits. 10 11 12
 - c. US surface forces assigned to SEA DRAGON operations
currently include one or two cruisers and from five to
seven destroyers. 13 14 15
 - d. To date, over 643 NVN waterborne logistic craft have
been destroyed and another 910 damaged in SEA DRAGON
operations. Additionally, storage areas, warehouses,
military areas, a SAM site, railroad sidings, POL storage
areas, and other targets have been destroyed. 16 17 18 19 20
 - e. Sightings by naval surface elements of coastal water-
borne traffic are currently equal to or greater than those
observed before February 1967, which is indicative that
infiltration along coastal waterways south of 20°N is
continuing. 21 22 23 24 25
3. (TS) DISCUSSION 26
 - a. Since SEA DRAGON operations were initiated, NVN has
taken full advantage of various holiday standdown periods
to move military supplies southward towards the DMZ without
fear of attack. The volume of traffic observed during these
periods reflects a throughput capability of up to 5,000 tons
per day. 27 28 29 30 31 32

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b. Should a decision to halt the bombing in NVN extend 1
to curtailment of SEA DRAGON operations, the North 2
Vietnamese would be free to resume watercraft movements in 3
coastal waters towards the DMZ. Logistic stocks could thus 4
be assembled adjacent to the DMZ, infiltrated into SVN 5
by watercraft, or transshipped around the DMZ through Laos. 6

c. Should the bombing of NVN be halted, it is assumed that 7
SEA DRAGON bombardment of shore targets would also cease. 8
However other SEA DRAGON operations should continue. 9

4. (S) CONCLUSIONS 10

a. SEA DRAGON operations have been effective in 11
interdicting infiltration of military material along 12
the coastal waterways of NVN south of 20° N latitude. 13

b. Should the bombing of NVN be halted, as stated in 14
the proposal, SEA DRAGON operations against enemy water- 15
craft should continue. 16

c. Despite the foregoing, it is judged that cessation 17
of bombing in NVN would be accompanied by restraints 18
against naval surface operations against NVN. 19

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ANNEX H

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION D (4)

1. (S) QUESTION. What is the relevance of the proposal to weather and seasonal factors? 1 2
2. (S) BACKGROUND 3
 - a. The southwest monsoon prevails from May through October. It tends to be strongest in July and August. 4 5
The southwest monsoon is characterized by frequent showers, high humidities, high temperatures, numerous thunderstorms, and extensive cloudiness in the southern lowlands and the interior highlands and generally good weather for air operations over NVN. 6 7 8 9 10
 - b. The northeast monsoon predominates from November until mid-March. For the northeast coastlands of SVN and the coastal plain and Red River delta in NVN, this monsoon is the wet season. Persistent low clouds, rain, and drizzle are characteristic of the weather in this region. The frequency of precipitation along the northeast coast is high; however, precipitation amounts are normally small. For the rest of the SVN and the Laotian Panhandle, the northeast monsoon is the dry season. 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
 - c. In NVN the period of favorable weather extends generally from May through October. 20 21
3. (S) DISCUSSION 22
 - a. The primary route for the infiltration into South Vietnam of personnel and materiel remains through the Laos/Cambodia trail complex. The heavy rains during the southwest monsoon affect the movement of supplies, particularly those transported by truck through Laos and Cambodia. Widespread heavy rain, coupled with airstrikes and cratering of roads, stops most truck movements in the 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

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Laotian Panhandle. Some short shuttle movements may continue over segments of good road structure. Although through truck service is severely limited during the southwest monsoon, waterways, bicycle trails, and human porters are used to continue logistic movements. The enemy has established a series of base areas to serve in resupplying his forces. These base areas have been identified just north of the DMZ, in Laos and Cambodia along the border, and throughout South Vietnam. The enemy's ability to prestock these base areas tends to compensate for reduced throughput due to poor weather and air interdiction.

b. The weather does not stop or greatly hinder the movement of personnel. The movement of the 324B NVA Division and elements of the 341st NVA Division across the DMZ took place during the dry season in the DMZ area, whereas that of the 325th NVA Division and 5th Regiment occurred during the northeast monsoon and spring transition periods of poor operational weather in the DMZ.

c. In NVN, the months of May through October are generally favorable for air operations against the LOCs and in the northeast quadrant. November through April are predominantly unfavorable. If the bombing of NVN is to cease, the greatest advantage to the United States will be obtained by halting air operations at the conclusion of a period of good weather, such as in late October.

4. (S) CONCLUSIONS

a. The least undesirable time for demilitarizing the DMZ would be at the onset of the southwest monsoon, usually in the month of May.

b. For the termination of bombing in NVN, the least undesirable time would be the onset of the northeast monsoon or late October.

c. The enemy's system of base areas and prestocks tends to compensate for reduced throughput of materiel in bad weather.

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ANNEX I

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION E

1. (U) QUESTION. If the proposal is to be made, what should be the timing?

2. (S) BACKGROUND. The Canadian proposal envisages, as a first step in physical disengagement, an approach to Hanoi that would call for US cessation of bombing and, concurrently, the reestablishment of the DMZ as an effective buffer, controlled by the ICC. The Canadian Government believes that such a scheme, if implemented, would lead to a cessation of hostilities under effective international guarantees and revised control procedures, within the parameters of the Geneva settlement.

3. (S) DISCUSSION

a. Weather conditions would be a secondary consideration since the enemy could continue infiltration operations via alternate routes if such is his intention. From a weather standpoint, the most desirable period would be at the onset of the northeast monsoon, when conditions become less favorable for air operations over NVN.

b. To halt the US bombing campaign against NVN at this time would probably induce psychological and morale effects in the GVN and among US/Allied Forces. Lacking adequate concessions by the enemy, the standdown could cause a reduction of the RVN/Allied war effort. In SVN, public interest in the Presidential election scheduled for September 1967 probably would not reach the proportions presently expected, and some of the recent progress in political and social matters could be lost.

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c. A feeling that the United States had decided to
terminate the war short of its objectives would be diffi-
cult to avoid, and further political instability in SVN
could result. A major consideration in the timing of the
proposal would, therefore, be the September elections in
SVN.

d. The ICC has proved ineffective in the past. The
standdown in NVN should be deferred until satisfactory
terms of reference for a control organization have been
adopted and that organization has been formed and deployed.

4. (S) CONCLUSIONS

a. If the proposal is to be made, it would be least
undesirable, from the viewpoint of GVN stability, to
wait until the newly elected government has taken office
following the September election.

b. If adopted, the proposal should be timed to follow
approval of new and adequate terms of reference for an
ICC and organization of a DMZ force.

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ANNEX J

DISCUSSION OF QUESTION F

1. (S) QUESTION. What will be the effect of the proposal
on the bombing in Laos? 1 2
2. (TS) BACKGROUND 3
 - a. The bombing in Laos has never been publicly
acknowledged and, in its present form, is permitted by
Premier Souvanna Phouma, on behalf of the Royal Loation
Government (RLG), against the backdrop of the greater
bombing effort in NVN. 4 5 6 7 8
 - b. The US Ambassador to Laos has stated that he
considers that Premier Souvanna Phouma could not allow
continued bombing in Laos if the bombing in NVN were
halted. 9 10 11 12
3. (TS) DISCUSSION 13
 - a. If the bombing were stopped in NVN but continued
in Laos, with or without RLG acquiescence, the United
States could expect strong pressures from all quarters,
but particularly from the Soviet Union, to cease air
operations over Laos. 14 15 16 17 18
 - b. Premier Souvanna has expressed grave concern* over
the political consequences for Laos if the DMZ were
effectively closed. Sealing the DMZ would, he stated,
make it obvious to all the world that the only route
from NVN to SVN was through Laos. Although Souvanna
has stated that the Lao military leaders would like to
ask for outside assistance to "clean out the panhandle,"
nevertheless, Souvanna is firmly committed to a policy
of neutrality.** Therefore, if a situation developed 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

* Vientiane msg 6419 to Sec State, 181000Z April 1967,
JCS IN 46148

** Vientiane msg 6968 to Sec State, 110300Z May 1967,
JCS IN 92405

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which forced him to acknowledge his acquiescence in 1
US military operations in Laos, he might interpret this 2
as abandonment of the 1962 Geneva Accords, in which 3
case he would probably resign. 4

c. In these circumstances, if bombing in Laos resulted 5
in the resignation of Souvanna or the overthrow of his 6
government, it is doubtful that his replacement would 7
be as effective. 8

d. The operations of the Forces Armees Royales, 9
CAS, and PRAIRIE FIRE depend heavily on tactical air 10
support. 11

e. Cessation of bombing in NVN would release antiair- 12
craft weapons for use in Laos, should NVN desire to deploy 13
them, thus rendering air operations over Laos more 14
hazardous. 15

4. (TS) CONCLUSIONS 16

a. Should a decision be reached to halt air operations 17
against NVN, the United States may also be subject to 18
pressure to halt the bombing in Laos. 19

b. Should airstrikes into Laos continue, increased 20
antiair defenses along the LOCs can be expected with 21
consequent increases in aircraft losses. 22

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